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IOC's Idea Of Awarding '24, '28 Games At Same Time Not Going Over Well With Officials

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Budapest's decision to abandon its bid for the '24 Games has crystalized the race into a head-to-head competition between Paris and L.A. the same week it became clear that a trial balloon of awarding both the '24 and '28 Games simultaneously is not going over well. Budapest was the most obvious sticking point to a scheme encouraged by IOC President Thomas Bach to make both the U.S. and France winners by giving one the top prize in '24 and the other the '28 Games. But just as the Budapest bid was crumbling, opposition -- or at least deep skepticism -- to that radical plan has bubbled up from IOC members, who would have to first approve a change to the Olympic charter and then cast a separate vote on the final bid in a matter of months. "To change the process midway through is tricky," said IOC Exec Board member Angela Ruggiero, who would have a vote in the charter alterations but not on the final bid vote as an American. "But to explore future ways to award the Games, to evolve with where we're at as a movement, great, let's have that discussion." Three IOC VPs and two other senior IOC members told Inside The Games this week they either opposed the concept or did not think it was feasible. The only member to have publicly voiced support was Canadian Dick Pound, the longest-serving IOC member. One Olympic insider said privately there is no guarantee Paris or L.A. would even cooperate with the plan. Most observers have assumed both countries want hosting duties badly enough that they would accept the '28 Games even if they strongly preferred '24. However, with the departure of Budapest, the insider said L.A. likes its chances in a head-to-head race and increasingly sees less reason to hedge by discussing '28. Without the unconventional bid from Hungary, L.A. can now draw a singular sharp comparison with Paris, emphasizing its youth, tech and media industries, its private financing and security. Neither L.A. nor Paris bid officials addressed questions on the subject.

ALL EYES ON '24 GAMES: The '24 Games remain the big prize regardless of how the IOC proceeds on the subject of bidding reforms. The winner of the '28 race under the double-winner scenario would face major logistical questions about how to transform a plan designed for '24, including rewriting rental agreements, financing commitments and publicity campaigns. Veteran Olympic sponsorship salesman Rob Prazmark said he saw upside in possibly waiting for '28: a strong bargaining position. If the IOC wants L.A. to take the '28 Games rather than bid against equal competitors, it ceases to become a contest and instead is a negotiation, Prazmark said. "The USOC and LA 2024 could use this to their advantage," he said. "Not only to their planning advantage,

but also in doing an arrangement that would be very favorable to the USOC but yet preserve the long-term interest of the movement.”

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